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11 A STUDY OF 49 FEMALE CONVICTS 11

BY

LOUISE E. ORDAHL AND GEORGE ORDAHL

REPRINTED FROM THE JOURNAL OF DELINQUENCY  
VOLUME 2, NO. 6, NOVEMBER 1917

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## A STUDY OF 49 FEMALE CONVICTS

LOUISE E. ORDAHL AND GEORGE ORDAHL

*Sonoma State Home, Eldridge, California*

The material treated in this study was gathered during the months of January and February of 1915, while making a preliminary survey of the population of the Joliet Penitentiary, Joliet, Ill. The majority of the cases were examined by L. E. Ordahl and a summary of the results has appeared in the Institution Quarterly.<sup>1</sup>

The study includes the psychological examination, an account of the prisoner's life as volunteered by herself, and the prison records, together with the account of the prisoner's behavior while in custody. The psychological examination was made by the use of the Faribault revision of the Binet-Simon scale of intelligence, by Dr. Fred Kuhlmann, and the Stanford revision by Dr. L. M. Terman. Of the first named revision the entire scale was used without modification, excepting that for the year fifteen a score of three was allowed for each of the tests passed. Tests from the Stanford revision included all those of the scale above the year twelve, and all of the 49 women were given an opportunity to pass these tests after they had finished with the twelfth year of the Faribault revision.

Forty-nine of the fifty prisoners at that time enrolled in the women's department of the penitentiary were examined. The matter of coming before the examiner was made voluntary. Some of the women felt sensitive about coming up for examination but all with the exception of one volunteered and gave every evidence of enjoying the experience and of co-operating fully with the examiner in performing the tests.

The ages of negro and white women are given separately in Table I.

Some of the data concerning the prisoners studied are given in tabular form in Tables I, II and III. These tables contain the age, the school grade the prisoner had reached on leaving school, the mental age and intelligence quotient according to the Faribault revision, and

1. Institution Quarterly, Sept. 15, 1917. p. 23.

TABLE I. CHRONOLOGICAL AGES OF CASES.

AGE	NEGRO	WHITE	TOTAL
15-20 years.....	0.....	1.....	1
20-25 years.....	6.....	2.....	8
25-30 years.....	7.....	3.....	10
30-35 years.....	4.....	5.....	9
35-40 years.....	6.....	3.....	9
40-45 years.....	1.....	4.....	5
45-50 years.....	2.....	1.....	3
50-55 years.....	0.....	1.....	1
55-60 years.....	0.....	1.....	1
60-65 years.....	0.....	2.....	2
Average age.....	31.....	37.....	

TABLE II. MENTAL STATUS OF 26 FEMALE NEGRO CONVICTS

No.	Age	Sch. gr.	Faribault		Higher tests		Devi- ation	Crime
			Sch.	Revision	added			
			M.A.	I.Q.	M.A.	I.Q.		
1	24	0	9.0	.60				burglary
2	36	8	9.0	.60				murder
3	36	4	9.0	.60				assault to murder
4	25	2	9.4	.63				burglary
5	24	5	10.0	.67				manslaughter
6	22	7	10.2	.68				burglary
7	37	8	10.2	.68	10-4	.65	-3	manslaughter
8	39	4	10.2	.68				larceny
9	28	4	10.4	.70				larceny
10	21	8	10.4	.70	10-8	.68	-2	murder
11	41	1	10.4	.70	11-0	.69	-1	robbery
12	29	0	10.8	.72	11-2	.70	-2	assault to murder
13	26	8	10.8	.72	11-6	.72	0	murder
14	25	3	10.8	.72	11-6	.72	0	manslaughter
15	31	4	10.8	.72				burglary-larceny
16	35	3	11.0	.73	12-0	.75	2	murder
17	26	1	11.2	.73	11-6	.72	-1	manslaughter
18	23	5	11.2	.73	12-2	.76	3	manslaughter
19	30	3	11.2	.73	11-6	.72	-1	robbery
20	47	5	11.4	.76	12-0	.75	-1	larceny
21	49	5	11.4	.76	12-0	.75	-1	murder
22	20	6	11.4	.76	12-3	.76	0	murder
23	34	2	11.4	.76	12-3	.76	0	murder
24	27	4	11.8	.79	12-0	.75	-4	larceny
25	30	7	12.4	.83	12-4	.77	-6	manslaughter
26	35	3	12.4	.82	12-8	.79	-3	murder

$$110/26 = 4.23$$

$$\text{AVE AGE} = .71$$

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the same data for the results obtained with the higher tests of the Stanford revision added.

TABLE III. MENTAL STATUS OF 23 FEMALE WHITE CONVICTS

No.	Age	Sch. gr.	Faribault		Higher tests		Devi-	Crime
			Revision	added	added	added		
			M.A.	I.Q.	M.A.	I.Q.	ation	
1	40	1	7.4	.50				murder
2	19	7	9.8	.65				larceny
3	31	8	10.2	.68				larceny
4	27	1	10.2	.68				manslaughter
5	52	1	10.2	.68				murder
6	30	8	10.2	.68				perjury
7	46	5	10.4	.70				confidence game
8	26	6	10.4	.70	11-0	.69	-1	larceny
9	37	3	10.4	.70	10-11	.68	-2	assault to murder
10	60	3	10.8	.72	11-3	.70	-2	manslaughter
11	60	14	11.0	.73	11-8	.73	0	murder (abortion)
12	34	4	11.0	.73	11-8	.73	0	murder
13	32	7	11.0	.73	12-6	.78	5	rape
14	33	3	11.2	.73	11-6	.72	-1	kidnapping
15	42	4	11.4	.76				robbery
16	35	4	11.4	.76				murder
17	23	8	11.6	.77	12-6	.78	1	robbery
18	39	7	11.6	.77	12-11	.81	4	rape
19	55	8	11.8	.79	12-2	.76	-3	harboring girls
20	29	11	12.0	.80	13-0	.81	1	confidence game
21	22	8	13.8	.92	14-10	.93	1	murder (abortion)
22	44	7	13.8	.92	16-0	1.00	8	murder
23	40	12	13.8	.92	14-10	.93	1	conspiracy

The accompanying charts represent the intelligence level of the 49 prisoners, as shown by intelligence quotients. Figure 1 shows the graph for negro women, Figure 2 the graph for white women, and Figure 3 for negro and white women combined.

Table IV is made on the basis of the prison records and the prisoners' own statements. So far as could be judged from the prisoners' reactions to tests involving school training these statements seemed correct. From the distribution of cases among the grades it may be seen that only 20 or 40 per cent have passed the fifth grade, and only 3 or 6 per cent have entered high school; 9 or 18 per cent have entered the eighth grade, and 24 or approximately 50 per cent have left school before reaching the fifth grade. Thus

Average =  
74

40  
24  
50  
20

50  
40  
18

40  
18  
11

20  
9  
24

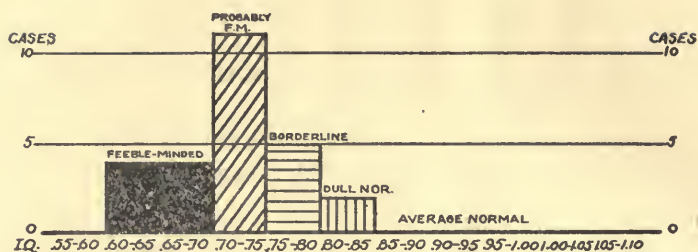


Fig. 1. Intelligence Classification of 26 Negro Female Convicts.

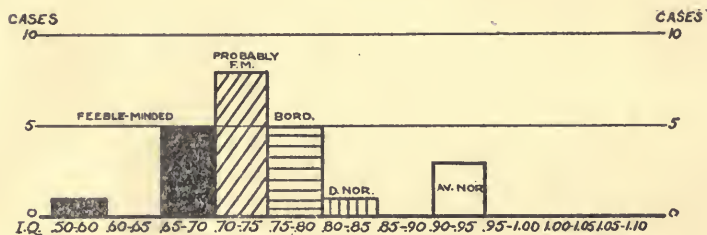


Fig. 2. Intelligence Classification of 23 White Female Convicts

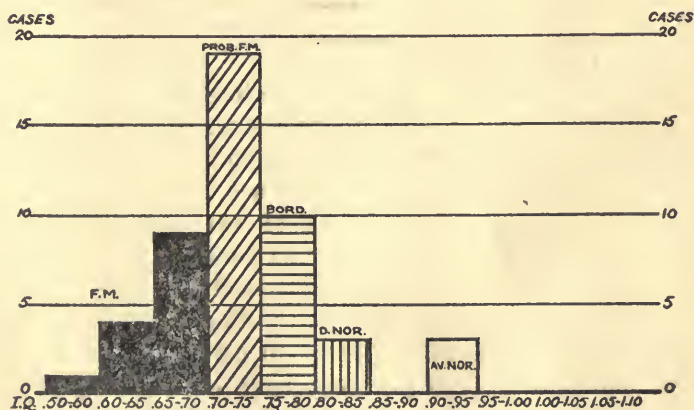


Fig. 3. Intelligence Classification of 49 Female Convicts, 26 Negro, 23 White.

at least half of these women have started out in life without any appreciable assistance from formal school training.)

TABLE IV. FORMAL EDUCATION. SHOWING SCHOOL GRADES REACHED AND RANGE OF I.Q. FOR EACH GRADE

GRADE	COLORED	WHITE	TOTAL	I.Q. RANGE
0	2	0	2	60-72
I	2	3	5	50-74
II	2	0	2	62-76
III	4	3	7	73-84
IV	5	3	8	66-78
V	4	1	5	70-76
VI	1	1	2	70-76
VII	2	4	6	61-92
VIII	4	5	9	60-92
IX	0	0	0	
X	0	0	0	
XI	0	1	1	60
XII	0	1	1	92
XIII	0	0	0	
XIV	0	1	1	73

As may be seen from following the range of intelligence quotients in the last column the correspondence between grade of intelligence and school attainments is only very general. A few cases of middle grade morons have reached the seventh and eighth grade and one case has completed the high school course. The completion of the grammar grades does not however mean very much unless the quality of the work done in the particular school is known. In the absence of such data little can be inferred from the records as given. The woman who has completed the high-school and yet attains only to the I. Q. .73, is 60 years of age and was very much agitated and disturbed over her imprisonment which may have interfered somewhat with the accurate performance of some of the tests. But judgment and insight were so much below normal that in the opinion of the examiner this subject could not, even under most favorable circumstances be rated higher than a very low normal.

In another article<sup>2</sup> the writers have found that male delinquents have not received the normal amount of education, (1) because of lack of parental control, (2) on account of economic and social con-

2. A Study of Fifty-three Male Convicts. Jour. Delin. 1-1, Mar. 1916. p. 9.

ditions, (3) because of peculiar mental constitution. Of the 49 women convicts 20 or 40 per cent give every evidence of not attending school longer because they found difficulty in doing the work required of them; 25 or 51 per cent have failed to receive the average amount of training either because of lack of parental control or because of economic and social conditions; 4 or 8.1 per cent because of peculiar mental traits have for various specific reasons given discontinued their schooling either before completing the eighth grade or the high school. One of these however has completed the equivalent of the American high school. Two of the women of this third group were evidently insane.

### TESTS

As indicated by the columns headed "Intelligence Quotient" in Tables II and III and Fig. 3 the general intelligence of this group of women of both races is quite low. Just how many of them shall be designated as feeble-minded depends upon what is accepted as the standard of normal or feeble intelligence. At present there are two points on the scale which have been designated as the dividing line between normal and feeble mentality, viz. the intelligence quotient of .70 and the intelligence quotient of .75<sup>3</sup>. The intelligence quotient of .70 has been quite generally accepted as the line below which all are definitely feeble-minded. Since this standard is admittedly low the standard of .75 intelligence quotient has been proposed as the dividing line between feeble and borderline intelligence. But this standard has been found by some authorities to be too high. In fact it appears that some persons testing below the intelligence quotient .75 are nevertheless normal. In the opinion of the writer these cases are exceptions and the reasons for the low intelligence quotient in conjunction with apparently normal intelligence can be specifically defined as such, if the examination is thoroughly conducted. In this paper tabulations will be given for both the seventy and the seventy-five intelligence quotient standard and these standards will be referred to respectively as the 'lower' and the 'higher' standard.

Table V gives the classification according to the intelligence

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3. Intelligence quotient is found by dividing the mental age by the chronological age. For the Faribault revision the divisor must not exceed 15; for the Stanford revision it must not exceed 16.

quotient as suggested by Dr. Terman,<sup>4</sup> viz. feeble-mindedness, borderline, dullness, normality, superior intelligence, etc. The tabulations are made separately and combined for the two races and contain the number of individuals and the percentages found in each group.

TABLE V. CLASSIFICATION BY INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENTS.

Race	No.	Standard	F.M.		Bord		Dull		Av. Nor.		Sup. Nor.	
			No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Negro	26	Lower	8	30.8	16	61.6	2	7.6	0	0	0	0
		Higher	19	73.0	5	19.2	2	7.6	0	0	0	0
White	23	Lower	6	26.0	13	56.5	1	4.3	3	13.0	0	0
		Higher	14	60.8	5	21.7	1	4.3	3	13.0	0	0
Both	49	Lower	14	28.5	29	59.1	3	6.12	3	6.12	0	0
		Higher	33	67.3	10	20.4	3	6.12	3	6.12	0	0
Both*	49	Lower	18	36.7	26	53.0	2	4.10	3	6.12	0	0
		Higher	31	63.2	13	26.5	2	4.10	3	6.12	0	0

\* Higher tests added.

According to the lower standard 8 of the 26 negro women, or 30.8 per cent are feeble-minded; 16, or 6.6 per cent are borderline and 2 or 7.6 per cent are dull normal. Judged according to the higher standard 19 or 73 per cent are feeble-minded, 5 or 19.2 per cent are borderline and 2 or 7.6 per cent are dull normal.

The white women rank slightly higher. According to the lower standard 6 or 26 per cent are feeble-minded, 13 or 56.5 per cent are borderline, 1 or 4.3 per cent dull normal and 3 or 13 per cent are average normal. Judged by the higher standard 14 or 60.8 per cent are feeble-minded, 5 or 21.7 per cent are borderline, 1 or 4.3 per cent are dull normal, and 3 or 13 per cent are average normal.

If the entire number of prisoners examined be considered then 14 or 28.5 per cent are feeble-minded, 29 or 59.1 per cent are borderline, 3 or 6.1 per cent are dull normal, 3 or 6.1 per cent are average normal. Judged by the higher standard 33 or 67.3 per cent are feeble-minded, 10 or 20.4 per cent are borderline, 3 or 6.12 per cent are dull and 3 or 6.12 per cent are average normal.

If the higher tests used be taken into consideration then, according to the lower standard 18 or 36.7 per cent are feeble-minded, 26 or 53 per cent are borderline, 2 or 4.1 per cent are dull normal, 3 or

4. The Measurement of Intelligence. Boston, 1916. p. 79.

6.12 per cent are average normal. Judged by the higher standard, 31 or 63.2 per cent are feeble-minded, 13 or 26.5 per cent are borderline, 2 or 4.1 per cent are dull and 3 or 6.12 per cent are average normal.

In general, little difference results from the use of the higher tests. They serve rather to throw a broader light on the individual's mentality than to place him in a different intellectual level, at least when the subjects are of no higher endowment than the ones here studied. Only 29 of the 49 cases are affected by their application. Of these, 9 show a difference of 1 per cent, 7 of 2 per cent, 4 a difference of 4 per cent and one each a difference of 5 per cent, 6 per cent and 7 per cent. The average amount of change for each subject is 1 per cent. Seventeen are minus differences and eight are plus differences. In only eleven cases is the classification affected. Of these 5 are changed from doubtful to feeble-minded, 3 from feeble-minded to borderline, 1 from borderline to dull normal, and 2 from dull normal to borderline.

### CRIMES

The crimes committed by the 49 women and for which they were sentenced to the penitentiary have been arranged in two groups in the order of the frequency of the crime. Group I includes criminal acts calculated to take human life. Group II includes criminal acts committed chiefly against property or to gain possession of money or property.

Twenty-six or 53 per cent of the total number of prisoners have committed murder, 23 or 47 per cent have committed other crimes, chiefly against property. Of the negro population of the penitentiary 16 or 61.5 per cent have committed murder and 10 or 38.4 per cent have committed other crimes. Of the white population 43.4 per cent have committed murder and 56.5 per cent have committed other crimes.

The total number of individuals in each group of crimes is nearly equal. There are, however, more negroes in the first group and fewer in the second. The crimes committed by the white women cover a wider range than those of the negro women. No negro women appear in the last six crimes named in Group II.

The mental classification of the negro and white women as they appear in the different groups is given in Table VII.

TABLE VI. CLASSIFICATION AND FREQUENCY OF CRIMES.

Group I. Crimes against human life.			
Crime	No.	White	Negro
Murder .....	15	7	8
Manslaughter .....	8	2	6
Assault to murder .....	3	1	2
Total .....	26	10	16
Group II. Crimes chiefly against property			
Crime	No.	White	Negro
Larceny .....	7	3	4
Burglary .....	4	0	4
Robbery .....	4	2	2
Rape (accessory) .....	2	2	0
Confidence game .....	2	2	0
Harboring girls .....	1	1	0
Kidnapping .....	1	1	0
Conspiracy .....	1	1	0
Perjury .....	1	1	0
Total .....	23	13	10

TABLE VII. PERCENTAGE MENTAL CLASSIFICATION OF NEGRO AND WHITE WOMEN ACCORDING TO NATURE OF CRIME

Group I (against life)		F.M.	BORD	DULL	AV. NOR.	SUP. NOR.
Negro, lower standard		25	62.5	12.5	0	0
Negro, higher standard		68	18.7	12.5	0	0
White, lower standard		30	50	0	20	0
White, higher standard		80	0	0	20	0
Group II (against property)		F.M.	BORD	DULL	AV. NOR.	SUP. NOR.
Negro, lower standard		40	60	0	0	0
Negro, higher standard		80	20	0	0	0
White, lower standard		23	61	7.7	7.7	0
White, higher standard		61	23	7.7	7.7	0

It may be seen from a comparison of the percentages here given that there is very little difference in the level of intelligence for the two groups "according to crime." If any thing significant can be concluded from so small a number, it appears that the group who commit murder are of somewhat higher mentality than the group who commit other crimes. Combining the whites and the negroes, for the higher standard 91.3 per cent of Group II are either feeble-minded or borderline, and for the same mental level in Group I only 84.2 per cent are either feeble-minded or borderline. The number of dull and average normal in Group I is just double that in Group II.

## CAUSES

The causes underlying human behavior are at best obscure, but from the limited study that could be given individual cases it appears that very few of the prisoners could be classed as inherently anti-social or criminal. In a study of male convicts the writer has found the causes of criminal behavior to be (1) feeble-mindedness, (2) untoward combination of circumstances, (3) peculiarity of mental constitution.<sup>5</sup> The causes for criminal behavior on the part of the women represented in this study readily fall into these three rubrics, with the possible exceptions of two cases who should be considered psychopathic, and two cases who are quite apparently insane. The following described cases are illustrative of the individuals classed according to the above rubrics.

Feeble-mindedness: H. S. age 24, mental age 9, I. Q. .60; three times in House of Correction, and parole defaulter, committed for larceny. This case can not copy a diamond from sight, defines all words in terms of use, and shows little tendency to foresight. She is silly and fails to comprehend the seriousness of her crime or to regard her present imprisonment as a disgrace. Indications are that she would continue in the same habits should she again be returned to society.

Untoward combination of circumstances: A. S., age 22, mental age 13.8, I. Q. .92. Crime, murder. A girl friend had died from induced abortion, and A. S. was accused and convicted of the crime. The accused claims, however, that she had no further part in the matter than imparting information concerning the means of inducing abortion. A. S. is a girl of good average intelligence, energetic, highly capable, and of that wholesome congenial type calculated to live a life of activity. Her environment was isolated and lacking in opportunities for social recreation and self-expression. In this situation she has fallen into habits which made her acquainted with the methods of inducing abortion. Indications are that she was not aware of the serious nature of such a crime and that she was interested only in assisting her friend to escape social disgrace.

Peculiar mental constitution: M. S., age 44, mental age 13.8, I. Q. .92. Crime, murder. This case is generally recognized by

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5. A Study of Fifty-three Male Convicts. *Jour. Delinq.* I-1, Mar, 1916. p. 13.

associates to be peculiar. She is conceited to an abnormal degree, forward, and lacking in the social graces. She is insensitive herself and behaves with utter disregard of others, and does not regard her crime as a disgrace in spite of the fact she has four children who are much in need of a mother's care. The crime was prompted from a selfish motive and without regard for her children. The mental peculiarity noted in this woman comes out in one of her children, which the writer later had the opportunity of examining, as feeble-mindedness.

Nineteen of the 49 female convicts have, according to the above mentioned classification, committed crime because they were feeble-minded, 24 because of untoward combination of circumstances, 4 because of peculiar mental traits, 2 because of insanity.

In not a few cases, there was some doubt whether the individual should be placed in the first or the second class. In these cases feeble-mindedness was involved along with a combination of circumstances to such a degree that it was difficult to determine to which of these causes the criminal behavior was due. In general if the individual were feeble-minded and the attendant circumstances of the crime were not such as to place in doubt the behavior of a normal person under similar conditions, the case was classed in the first named group. If on the other hand the circumstances of the individual's life seemed to be such that habits and behavior established were especially favorable for the commission of the crime in which she was involved, the case was placed in the second named group, even if the individual were feeble-minded.

The above suggested classification of causes is based on mental condition either native or acquired and upon circumstances either remote or immediate which tend to predispose the individual to delinquent behavior. There are, however, certain immediate or secondary causes which lead to crime that are significant. It has been stated that none of the women, with the possible exception of one, was found to be inherently anti-social, and this appears true from whatever point of view the delinquent behavior is approached. In a detailed study of the life histories of the subjects, a safe majority of those classed in Group II are followers rather than instigators and leaders in crime. They are i.e., criminals by persuasion rather than by nature. As illustration, one woman committed perjury because induced to do so by other parties in whom she was interested. An.

other woman lived a respectable life until after her marriage when she was persuaded by her husband to become a petty thief.

In the murder cases the situation is somewhat different. In 22 out of the 26 cases (15 negroes and 7 whites) there is a romance involved and a man or woman has been killed because of jealousy or thwarted love. The act of killing is not premeditated but is the result of momentary impulse. In these romance murders the negroes appear more frequently than do the white women. Fifteen of the 16 murders committed by the negroes are sex murders and only 6 of the 10 murders committed by the white women are for the same cause. On the whole, however, race differences do not appear to be pronounced. Such differences as exist are due rather to degree of intelligence than to perceptible race traits. The negro is apparently more emotional and more inclined to impulsive behavior and there is some indication that the sex impulse is more active. However the element of low intelligence enters into such an extent that it is difficult to determine whether delinquent behavior is due to the strength of native impulsive reactions, or to lack of sufficient intelligence to establish adequate control. In the opinion of the writer lack of intelligence is a more dominant factor than strength of native impulse.

In the matter of immediate cause of criminal behavior data are not conclusive. Such conclusions as are here drawn are based on incidental remarks of the individual and on scraps of conversation provoked by the tests or from meeting the prisoner socially. Often the most valuable data came in this way when the individuals were off guard and more natural in their reactions than they would be if asked directly to explain the situation leading to their delinquency. In the light of such data as these and verified in part by the prison records which showed the prisoners to be "accessory" to crime, the conclusion is reached that, in 87 per cent of the cases the murders were committed in a moment of emotional excitement, the emotion being excited by sex attraction. All other crimes are in the majority of cases committed through the influence of others who are leaders in the crime.

Inasmuch as there are only 50 women in the state penitentiary it is reasonable to suppose that this small number constitutes a selected group of a larger number of female delinquents not ordinarily committed to a state penitentiary. It should therefore be

understood that the data here presented and the conclusions drawn are for the women committed to this particular penitentiary at this particular time and not for the whole class of delinquent women who may be found at large or in other institutions.

Eighteen or 36.7 per cent of the 49 women had previous to their present commitment served terms either in jail or in the penitentiary, as indicated in Table VIII. The column headed "Crime" indicates the offense for which the subject is now serving sentence. The number of cases serving terms either in jail or in the penitentiary is indicated by the distribution in the table. From this distribution it appears that two-thirds of the recidivists have served terms in jail and one-third have previously served terms in the penitentiary.

TABLE VIII. PREVIOUS TERMS SERVED. TOTAL 18 PERSONS.

Crime	In Jail				In Penitentiary			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Murder			1				1	
Confidence game		1						1
Robbery						2		
Burglary			1					
Kidnapping		1						
Larceny		3	1			2		
Assault to murder		1						
Manslaughter	3							
Total	3	6	3	0	0	4	1	1

In the case of recidivists it might be expected that certain inherent traits were at bottom the cause of their persistent delinquency. The group of recidivists here presented, however, gave no indication of inherent anti-social tendencies. Their general mental level was too low for classification among the ranks of intellectually capable criminals and their sympathetic attitude and good intentions would exclude them from the class of so-called moral delinquents. All are below the mental age of 12; six are below the I. Q. .70, eight are between the intelligent quotients .70 and .75, one has an intelligence quotient of .76 and one an intelligence quotient of .80. Thus all but one are either feeble-minded or borderline, and this one is barely on the line between borderline and dull normal. The accepted definition of this class of persons would preclude any

further consideration of the causes of their delinquency, unless the attendant circumstances of their acts were markedly accidental, or unless peculiarities or traits calculated to lead to disregard of conventions were present. Such traits might be said to be present in three of the eighteen prisoners, although in each of these cases the mentality was low. One a mental 7.4 was insane, one a mental 11 was markedly peculiar, and one somewhat peculiar was suspected of being a drug fiend. The remaining individuals presented no striking deviations aside from low grade intelligence and lack of training.

### MORAL JUDGMENT

Tests of moral judgment have thus far not proven very successful. Owing however to certain criticisms advanced on the probable efficiency of the intelligence tests used, the examiners of this group of women introduced two problems calculated to afford opportunity for expressing moral judgment. Attempt was made to make the problem sufficiently simple to fall within the comprehension of all the prisoners and yet interesting enough to appeal to them as a problem. The problems were as follows:

I. Some people think it is as bad to steal a little thing as to steal a big thing, e. g., it is as bad to steal a pin as to steal \$5.00. What do you think about it?

II. Suppose a man committed a crime; he is the father of four children and the children are absolutely dependent upon him for a living. An innocent man—a friend—is up for trial for the crime. On account of the other man's family the innocent man pleads guilty and is convicted. Was that right or wrong? If the answer "He did right" was given the examiner would say, "But that would be telling a lie." This would usually bring out what the subject thought if he seemed to think at all.

These problems were submitted to 18 negroes and 19 white women. To "I" the negro women gave uniformly similar answers. They replied with very little thought or consideration: "Stealing is stealing, one is as bad as the other." One only declared, "It is not a sin to steal a pin, because no one cares for a pin."

Thirteen of the white women gave answers which indicated that they considered the act of stealing to be independent of the value of the article stolen. Some of these women were inclined to discuss the

problem at length. Six declared it to be as great a sin to steal a pin since such an act would lead the individual to commit greater thefts. Six others of the 19 thought it a greater crime to steal \$5.00 since the value was greater. A number also volunteered the opinion that the penalty should be less for stealing an article of small value than for stealing an article of greater value.

On Problem II the 18 colored women divided equally. Nine declared the innocent man did wrong to plead guilty, and nine thought the act highly commendable. The prevailing answer given by those who disapproved of the act of the innocent man was that "every one should suffer for his own faults." A few added, in substance, that it was not right for a man to incriminate himself. The nine women who approved of the innocent man pleading guilty thought the act commendable "because he was helping a friend." The replies were in general characterized by the following: "He did the right thing because he was helping a friend." "It is a very brave act. He was helping someone who needed help."

The white women entered into discussion somewhat more fully, although they were quite as much divided as were the negroes. Seven of the 19 women thought unfavorably of the sacrifice, and twelve regarded the act with favor. Four explained that the innocent man did right but that they themselves would not like to do it. Six explained that lies were justifiable under such circumstances, that a lie depended upon the intention of the agent. They did not, however, take into account the condition of the children.

In regard to the answers given in "I" there is little to conclude. The negro women failed to see any problem at all. The white women appeared to find a moral situation but handled it badly. In Problem II the negroes do not get beyond the consideration of friendship. The white women appreciate the situation to a slightly greater degree since they attempt to justify and to explain an uncommon act on the grounds of its merits. They fail, however, to take into consideration the object or persons for which the act was performed and to this extent have failed in moral judgment.

While in no case is there any evidence of grasping an abstract notion, nevertheless some of the answers are of a higher order than others and seem to involve a more complex mental process. The

higher type answers are more frequently found in the replies to Problem II designated favorable. There is also a general correspondence between the higher intelligence quotients and the affirmative answers as appears in the following tabulation:

*Replies of Negro Women to Moral Problem II.*

Individual intelligence quotients:

Unfavorable ..... 60, 62, 66, 68, 68, 70, 72, 72, 74

Favorable ..... 72, 74, 74, 76, 76, 76, 78, 82, 84

*Replies of White Women to Moral Problem II.*

Individual intelligence quotients:

Unfavorable ..... 68, 70, 70, 72, 73, 74, 92

Favorable ..... 61, 70, 74, 74, 76, 76, 77, 77, 78, 80, 92, 92

If the differences in general intelligence as indicated by a comparison of the intelligence quotients following the unfavorable and favorable replies can be taken as significant, it would appear that the test as given is one of intelligence rather than one of moral judgment.

## OCCUPATIONS AND PAROLE

In the matter of regulating parole several factors enter, among which are occupation, capability, moral character, and intellectual capacity. The previous activities of the 49 women were distributed among various occupations as follows: housework 41, factory 2 laundry 1, waitress 1, designer 1, cook 1, farm 1, singer 1. Efficiency in these relatively unskilled occupations would insure the individual a reasonable living wage but judging from the quality of work done by the individuals as seen in the prison they could not have been very efficient in their occupations prior to their commitment.

Moral character is in part indicated by the fact that the individual is a prisoner. But the condition of being convicted of crime does not preclude the individual from consideration as a moral being. Participation in crime does not depend fundamentally upon the morality of the individual. Some of the prisoners appear to maintain certain standards of morality in spite of their criminal behavior. Prison records show 38 women to have good or fair habits and 11 to have bad habits: 45 are credited with having good dispositions, and 4 are said to be difficult to manage. Histories and individual stories show 13 of the white women to have been immoral sexually; however, only one of these was actively engaged in prostitution. The other 12 have been im-

immoral through associations and have not become prostitutes. In regard to the negroes the matter of sex morality is more difficult to determine; there is however no evidence of prostitution among them, but on the other hand it seems probable that they have been as moral as other women of their class and station in life. In regard to the white women besides the 13 mentioned above, one was guilty of practicing criminal abortion, 2 were accessory to rape, and one of harboring girls. From the standpoint of society these four women are guilty of criminal and highly reprehensible behavior. But it is doubtful if these same women have considered their behavior as at all criminal. In discussing the matter they experience great difficulty in comprehending the social attitude and regard it as unreasonable. They argue that they are no more guilty than many other people doing the same thing unmolested by the authorities. People, they maintain, come to their house of their own free will and depart unmolested. One woman was very proud of the clean and hygienic condition in which she kept her house. Another favorite argument is, that since traffic in sex is bound to go on why should not they as well as others profit by its existence. In the case of the abortionist the prisoner claimed that the practice was very general, that the persons instrumental in her arrest were themselves abortionists, and that she was at best extending charity to persons in trouble. A further study of such cases would undoubtedly yield valuable psychological data for the sociologist. But so much as is given here is sufficient to illustrate the attitude into which these people have drifted. In the opinion of the writer they were expressing their honest convictions. In two cases it is quite certain the women themselves have not been immoral. In the other two cases there is suspicion but no certainty of their immorality.

While therefore the moral tone of this group of women is not average it would probably condition their parole to no greater extent than their degree of general intelligence.

Thirty-six of the women are married, 2 are divorced, 1 widowed and 10 are unmarried. Fifty-nine children have been born to 19 of the married women. The highest number of children belonging to one woman is 13. The majority of these mothers are much attached to their children and suffer from being separated from them. How much they are affected from the inhibition of the maternal instinct may be indicated from the pleasure they derive from the possession of dolls. In the year 1915 the prison management arranged for the

women prisoners to receive dolls as Christmas presents. Although these women were on the average over 30 years of age, they prized this gift above all others and continued to take great pleasure from dressing, undressing and playing with these dolls.

The presence of children complicates the question of parole. It would be difficult to deny to these women the possession or association of their children and yet it would not ordinarily be well for the prisoner to return to his old environment, and in many cases it is not fit that the mother should have charge of her children.

Long imprisonment stimulates the tendency to mate and such women as do not have husbands awaiting them on their return from prison soon find mates and are married. In this manner after-care is again complicated. The effectiveness of their prison training will depend largely upon the character of the men they marry. A union effected as hastily as are some of these is more than likely to be an unhappy one and to prove unfavorable to the efforts of the parole authorities.

With industrial and economic efficiency limited and social standards low, the problem of dealing with this class of persons becomes increasingly difficult. With an average chronological age of thirty the situation is no longer that of the juvenile delinquent. Most of the women are past the age when real reform or re-education can be very effective. The majority of the recidivists have formed unfavorable habits which leaves little hope for moral improvement. The individuals who are sentenced for the first time and who are criminals by accident rather than by nature present a more hopeful aspect. However even here lack of intelligence is a great handicap. At least 75 per cent or 80 per cent of these persons must always work under direction. Their intelligence is not sufficient to enable them to pursue an independent existence in the industrial world. The prison management of the Joliet penitentiary had planned and put into effect a course of domestic science, and the women were being taught general housework, cooking, dressmaking, and laundry. This was a great achievement and no doubt the best thing that could be done for the women, and yet when the low intellectual level of the prisoners is taken into consideration, it becomes clear that these individual women could not go out and command first rate positions in any of these occupations. They can learn to do fairly good work, but not high grade. Whatever

they do must be done under supervision and hence they could become domestics in a private home or assistants in dressmaking or cooking, but could not take an independent lead in any of these occupations.

For this class of persons punishment by confinement in prison has not proven effective, at least not beyond a certain limited time indicated by the behavior of the individual. For the definitely feeble-minded there should be no prison sentence at all. The court should have the power to commit them to the care of institutions for the feeble-minded or to institutions for the defective incorrigible. For the higher grade defective or the very low grade normal where prison sentence seems advisable there should be a system of parole whereby the individual on leaving prison could work under the direct supervision of the parole department of the prison management. Some such a system as that now in practice by the State School for Feeble-minded, Rome, N. Y.<sup>6</sup> whereby they maintain homes in the city, accommodating twenty girls each, under the direction of a social worker and a matron, might be adopted. The girls go out to work during the day and return to the homes for the night. After a time depending upon behavior and the quality of work done the girl may be allowed to remain with the private family for whom she works, and in this way a number are permanently paroled or discharged, while others remain permanent wards of the state. A large number of the women found in the prison are approximately of the same grade of intelligence as that of the girls with which this form of colonization has proven successful, and it would seem reasonable to suppose a number of these delinquent women might be similarly handled, with much greater economy and advantage to society. Other advantages would be certain to accrue from such a system. More women who are delinquent would be found guilty by the jury and convicted by the court. At present men are prejudiced against sending women to prison. In the large state of Illinois there were only 50 women in the state penitentiary as against some 1800 men. Just why the other women who are delinquent have not been committed is a matter of speculation. As a matter of common observation, however, the women in the penitentiaries are not particularly attractive. This fact together with the evidence from this study that they are not even of average normal

6. Twenty-second annual report Rome State Custodial Asylum, Rome, N. Y., pp. 20-22.

intelligence, would suggest that the brighter and more attractive women are able by virtue of working on the sympathies of the court and society to keep out of the penitentiaries. Such influence as this would not readily be effective however if it were generally known that prisons were institutions particularly designed and highly equipped to reform and educate rather than to punish. If a body of individuals having to do with the administration of justice were convinced that the guilty party would have every opportunity to regain her freedom at the earliest possible date dependent only upon her capacity for becoming morally and economically efficient they would prefer to commit women rather than to return them to society unprotected where they would be exposed to former evil influences.

Not all women committed would be eligible for parole, or the sort of treatment here suggested. Eligibility would depend upon the consideration of many factors, such as educability, morals, particular traits, previous associates, and disposition. Each individual should be studied and passed upon by persons skilled and practiced in the science of human behavior. Treatment and parole would naturally rest with the prison management and should be based upon the combined evidence from different departments and a person skilled in psychological interpretations of human behavior.

This expert should have needed assistance and entire freedom in studying cases both in the laboratory and from the point of view of previous training and conduct. His chief function would be experimentation and research. From the practical point of view he would probably find three classes, viz.: 1, the feeble-minded; 2, those who have committed crime through circumstances not likely to recur and 3, those who because of peculiar mental traits or habituation are certain to continue in crime. For the third class the psychologist or the educator could offer little if any hope of social freedom. Classes 1 and 2 are more hopeful of reform. The problem here would be to differentiate those who are mentally so constituted, by nature or by previous training, that they would be amenable to education or re-education from those who, while falling into these two classes, would nevertheless not be suitable subjects for reform and parole.

The feeble-minded should not be in prison, but since they are there, without immediate hope of elimination, and since parole with this class of persons has in a measure proven successful, it would

seem advisable for prison administration to begin short sentence and early parole with persons of comparative low intelligence. Innovations, however, in the interest of greater efficiency on the part of penal institutions should be made only when there is practical assurance of success. Propagandas for the better care and protection of the feeble-minded has brought about a more intelligent attitude toward delinquency, and society is much interested but it is, at the same time, skeptical of ideas sympathetic toward criminals. Under such conditions practical demonstration that present ineffectual penal methods can in part be replaced by better ones that are remedial and reformatory would tend to gain the confidence of the general public and consequently bring support for more improvements and reforms.

### SUMMARY

I. Fourteen or 28.5 per cent of the 49 cases studied have an intelligence quotient below .70 and are therefore definitely feeble-minded. Fifteen test between .70 and .75 and are probably feeble-minded, 10 or 20.4 per cent test between .75 and .80 and are borderline; 43 or 87.7 per cent are either borderline or feeble-minded; 6 or 12.2 per cent are normal.

II. Formal education is below average, 50 per cent having left school before reaching the fifth grade and only 6 per cent having entered high school.

III. Twenty-six or 53 per cent have committed crimes calculated to take human life; 47 per cent have committed crimes chiefly against property.

IV. Eighteen or 36.7 per cent of the 49 cases are recidivists, two-thirds of whom have served terms in jail, one-third in the penitentiary.

V. 38.7 per cent have committed crime because of feeble-mindedness, 49 per cent because of circumstances, 8.1 per cent because of peculiar mental traits, 4 per cent because of insanity.

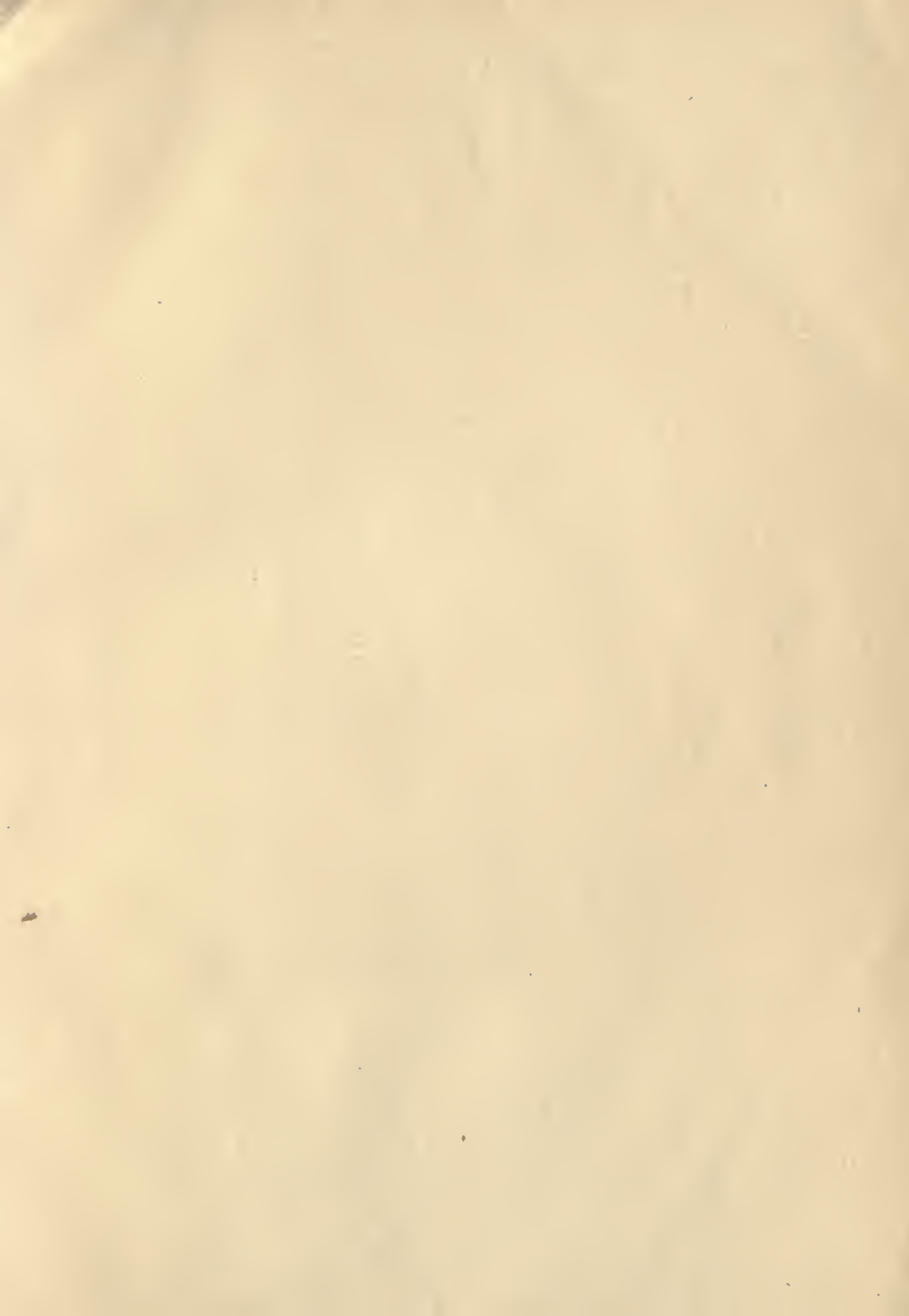
VI. Occupations of the prisoners have been chiefly house-work and unskilled activities.

VII. Negroes probably commit crime from impulse more frequently than do white women but low intelligence is responsible for lack of impulsive control.

VIII. For the grade of delinquents presented in this study colony-parole is suggested as the most effective solution.

28.6









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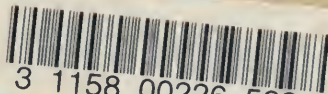
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